THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

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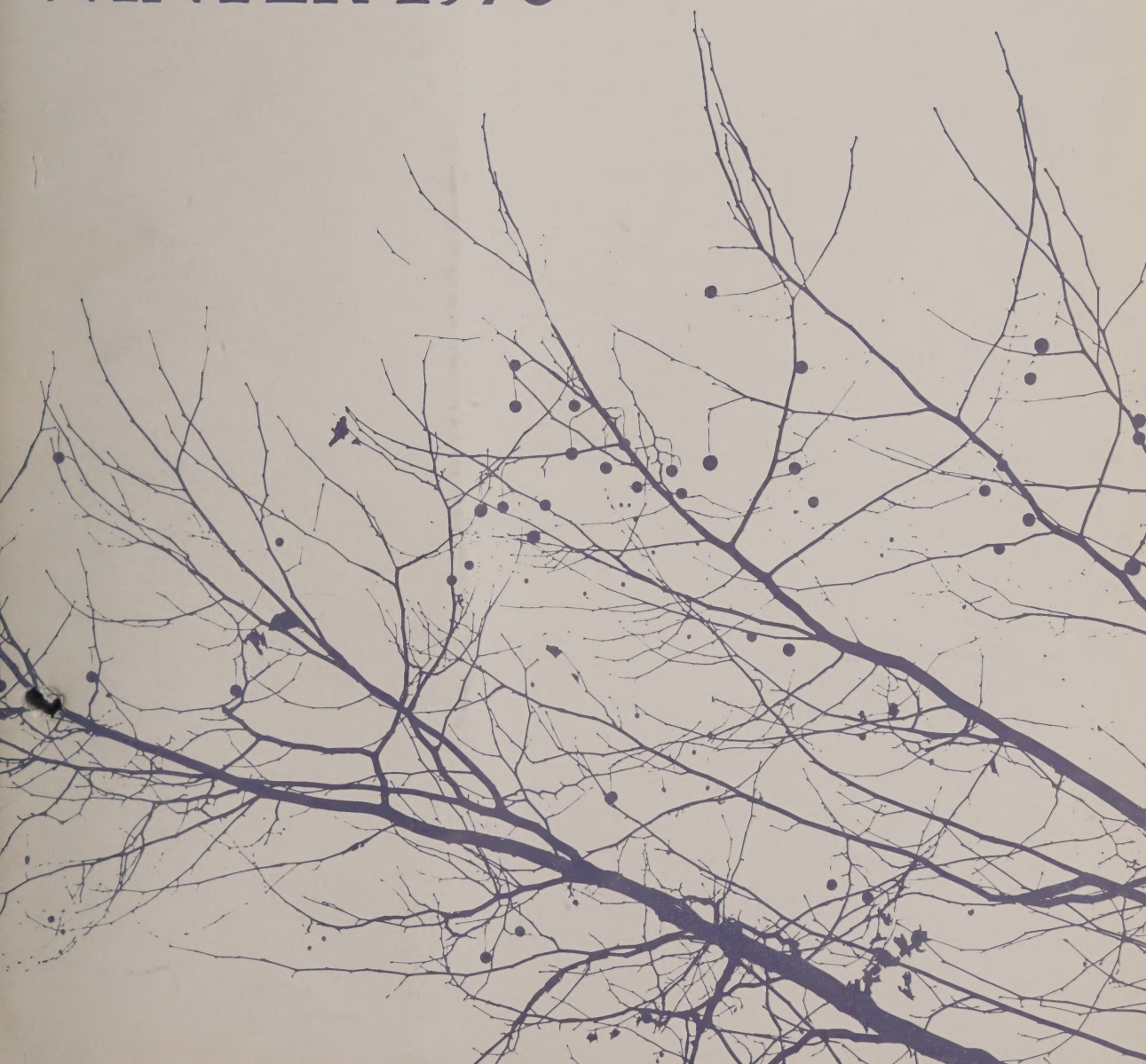

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The Nature Conservancy

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

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Volume 23, Number 1 **Winter 1973**

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Cover photo by Sam Sloan.

Inside cover photo by Sam Sloan.

LAND CONSERVATION THROUGH PRIVATE ACTION

The Nature Conservancy is the only national conservation organization, receiving its support from the public, whose resources are devoted to the preservation of ecologically and environmentally significant land.

Some 311,500 acres of forests, swamps, marshes, prairies, mountains, beaches, and islands, in 851 projects throughout the United States, have been saved from destruction by the Conservancy since the acquisition of its first preserve in 1954.

The Nature Conservancy works in three ways to protect threatened natural areas: by purchase of land with funds raised through public subscription, by acceptance of donations of land, and by advance acquisition of land for local, state, and federal governments.

A member-governed non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP
$300

Members receive the *News.*
* (Includes Life Membership with initial contribution)
Contributions to The Nature Conservancy are tax-deductible.

NEW PROJECTS

California

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY FLOWER PRESERVE (Sonoma County). A 2-acre purchase is a remnant of Sonoma pine barrens and contains the last remaining population of *Arcto staphylos densiflora,* a bearberry bush species.

LILLIAN D. HOHFELD PRESERVE, Elkhorn Slough—Grimmer-Rodgers Addition—(Monterey County). A gift of ¾ interest from Mrs. Ethna Day Peterson, Mrs. Katherine Rodgers Ashcraft, and Dr. John A. Rodgers, 40 acres of salicornia marsh expand the preserve at Elkhorn Slough to 179 acres. Elkhorn Slough is the only major undisturbed salt marsh remaining along 250 miles of California coast between Morro Bay and San Francisco.

PETOYNIA SLOUGH, San Francisco Bay Project (Solano County). 365 acres lie at the northeast extremity of San Francisco Bay and contain mixed salt and fresh water marsh. The conservation easement is a donation of Mr. and Mrs. Donald W. Raymond, Mr. and Mrs. E. Richard Woolley, Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Toomey, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul C. Bryan, Jr.

Connecticut

FREDERICK C. WALCOTT PRESERVE—Beaver Pond Addition—(Norfolk). 3 acres are mainly hemlock forest with pine and laurel. Beckley Pond Brook flows south from the existing 584-acre preserve into Beaver Pond on the new tract. The addition is a gift of the Grant Swamp Group.

SHANGRI-LA (Bristol). 12 acres of hilltop woodland are a gift of Mr. George Bryce. The mixed hardwood forest is predominated by white oak; ground cover includes laurel and low bush blueberry. Rock outcrops show glacial scouring.

Florida

BIG CYPRESS SWAMP—Additions—(Collier and Monroe Counties). In a pilot program of advance acquisitions undertaken at the Department of Interior's request, the Conservancy has purchased two more tracts, 5 and 2½ acres. Big Cypress Swamp is an important fresh water supply to the Everglades and Ten Thousand Islands areas. Interspersed with higher tree islands, the swamp's sawgrass prairie, cypress hammocks, and shallow flowing water provide habitat for alligator, bald eagle, deer, osprey, nesting heron and egret, and other wading birds.

SWEETBAY SWAMP—Cogliano Addition—

(Leon County). With the new 1-acre purchase, the preserve in the city of Tallahassee is enlarged to 7 acres. A glade, marsh, and bog, as well as several clear streams, are found on the sanctuary. Vegetation includes mosses, ferns, sweetbay, sweet gum, black tupelo, magnolia, black cherry, and dogwood. Over 70 species of birds frequent the area.

Georgia

CHATTAHOOCHEE PALISADES—Additions—(Fulton and Cobb Counties). The Conservancy's goal of preserving 383 acres along the Chattahoochee River was successfully met with the acquisition of two final tracts, a 158-acre donation of the Georgia Power Company and a 24-acre purchase. In cooperation with local and state agencies and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Conservancy's program focused on a portion of the scenic 48-mile stretch of riparian land from Buford Dam south to Peachtree Creek, Atlanta. All acquisitions will be deeded to the State.

SWEETWATER CREEK (Douglas County). Purchased by the State of Georgia through an option obtained by The Nature Conservancy, 867 acres of Southern highland oak-hickory forest include 4½ miles of rocky gorge along Sweetwater Creek. Evidence of fourteenth century Indian occupation, as well as a Civil War factory site, are present in the area. The preserve is located just 15 miles from metropolitan Atlanta.

Hawaii

KIPAHULU VALLEY—Phase I Addition—(Maui County). 14% interest in 596 acres is a gift of Mrs. Jean W. McCaughey. The lush Kipahulu Valley preserve includes waterfalls, pools, and virgin tropical rain forest, stretching 8 miles from the top of Haleakala volcano to the sea.

Illinois

MEREDOSIA ISLAND (Cass and Morgan Counties). 1,850 acres on the Illinois River flood plain between Beardstown and Meredosia were donated by the heirs of the estate of the late Mr. James Anderson, Sr. The preserve is mainly bottomland hardwood forest, with marshes and meadows, and is reputed to be one of the best waterfowl areas remaining on the Illinois River. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife will receive the deed to the land for creation of a National Wildlife Refuge.

Indiana

EFROYMSON NATURE PRESERVE (Hamilton County). 22 acres of bottomland forest include several 200-300-year-old white and bur oaks and abundant wildflowers. The preserve is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence W. Efroymson.

Iowa

FRIEDA HAFFNER PRESERVE (Dickinson County). The 110-acre preserve lies on the western edge of the lateral moraine of the Wisconsin glaciation's Cary lobe. Geography includes one entire kettle hole and part of another. The partial kettle hole has steep dry walls of remnant short grass prairie (rare in Iowa) and a bottom of rich marsh. Other plant communities on the property include tall grass prairie and moist prairie slough. The majority of the purchase funds were made available by the late Frieda Haffner. The Iowa Chapter is fund-raising for the remainder.

Kansas

BIG BASIN—ST. JACOB'S WELL (Clark County). At the request of the State of Kansas, the Conservancy purchased 1,800 acres of short grass prairie which geologically demonstrate the Permian and Cretaceous eras. Fossils of large mammals, notably mammoths and camels, have been found on the tract. The area was an oasis in the surrounding arid country, providing settlers with water during dry seasons and providing Indians with a green encampment.

ETHEL AND RAYMOND F. RICE WOODLAND (Douglas County). 80 acres are a gift of Mr. Raymond F. Rice. The oak-hickory woodland contains 31 tree and 21 shrub and vine species and is the westernmost range of the ladies' tresses orchid (*Spirantes ovalis*). Thirty-six species of warblers have been reported in the area, including 6 rare in Kansas.

Maine

VAUGHN'S ISLAND (York County). The 35-acre island is separated from the mainland peninsula of Land's End, Cape Porpoise, by a 30-40-foot wide tidal creek. About one-quarter of the island is salt marsh with low areas supporting tall grasses and low shrubs. Higher ground supports stands of oak and some white and sugar pine, alder, fir, and hardwoods. The preserve is a gift of the Vaughn's Island Preservation Trust.

Minnesota

DULUTH HAWK LOOKOUT (St. Louis County). The 91-acre purchase is on the most heavily used hawk migratory flyway in the contiguous U.S. and includes the "official" observation site of ornithologists, a bluff 530 feet above Lake Superior. From mid-September to mid-November,

many thousands of hawks pass over this area on Duluth's Skyline Drive. The project was carried out by the Duluth Audubon Society in conjunction with the Conservancy's Minnesota Chapter. The preserve has been transferred to the City of Duluth.

HARDSCRABBLE WOODS (Hennepin County). 23 acres of maple, oak, and elm woods on Hardscrabble Point, Lake Minnetonka, are a gift of Mrs. Morris T. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. William Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn R. Grife, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Helm, Mr. and Mrs. Graham McGuire, Mr. and Mrs. William Melinot, and Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Truesdell, Jr.

HOVLAND WOODS (Cook County). 160 acres near Lake Superior are mainly upland mixed conifer-hardwood forest with some swamp-bog-flooded beaver flowage. Typical flora include old growth white spruce, balsam fir, cedar, paper birch, red maple, and sugar maple (near northern Minnesota limit), as well as sedge and grass meadow communities, alder, and willow. The presence of moose and deer and the tract's location in the primary timber wolf territory strongly indicate that this area is supporting habitat for the nationally endangered *Canis lupus*. The tract is not within the proposed State Wolf Refuge. The Minnesota Chapter is fund-raising for the project.

LAKE ALEXANDER NATURAL AREA—Additions—(Morrison County). Two additional purchases of 80 acres each enlarge the preserve to 240 acres. The area features a parallel series of kettle lakes and marshes, comprising some of the most complex glacial topography in the state. Paper birch, large-toothed and quaking aspen, red oak, and red and white pine provide habitat for white-tailed deer and ruffed grouse. Fund-raising is in progress by the Minnesota Chapter, which hopes to acquire the remainder of the 1,120-acre area.

LAKE ELMO—Brown Addition—(Washington County). With a glacial lake at the center, 100 acres contain paper birch, spruce, tamarack, and aspen. The tract was purchased in cooperation with the Washington County Board of Supervisors for the proposed Lake Elmo Regional Park just outside the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The Conservancy has thus far acquired 242 acres for the Park.

STAFFANSON PRAIRIE (Douglas County). To keep the tract from being sold for cultivation, the Conservancy purchased the 80-acre dry-to-mesic prairie. Located on a morainic hill, the prairie supports big and little bluestem, sideoats grama, porcupine grass, and smooth aster. The Minnesota Chapter, which identified the prairie as a preservation priority through its Natural Areas Survey, is fund-raising for the preserve.

WESTERN PRAIRIE (Wilkin County). 600 acres of upland tall grass prairie are habitat for the threatened prairie chicken, as well as migrating sandhill cranes, marsh hawks, red-tailed hawks, ducks, snow owls, foxes, and deer. Vegetation includes big and little bluestem, prairie moccasin, small white lady's slipper, and lead plant. Fund-raising is in progress by the Minnesota Chapter.

New York

BYE PRESERVE (Westchester County). Heavily wooded with oak, maple, and beech with scattered pine and hemlock, 24 acres are a gift of the Bye and Bye Foundation.

HOLLINS PRESERVE (Suffolk County). A donation of two tracts from Mr. Harry B. Hollins and Mrs. Lilias Hollins, a total of 30 acres are primarily salt marsh bordering Quintuck Creek. Highbush blueberry and red maple grow on the wet bottomland. White-tailed deer, pheasants, blue herons, mergansers, and mallards frequent the area. A coalition of universities, including Adelphi University, will manage the preserve as a Marine Research Station.

HOPE GODDARD ISELIN NATURE PRESERVE (Nassau County). The 42-acre preserve is about one-half woodland of beech, laurel, hickory, maple, and oak and one-half open grassy meadow. The entire acreage is planned for donation in a series of four annual gifts of 10½ acres each, the first of which has been received. The donors are Mrs. Mary Dodderidge, Mrs. Ann Payne, and Mr. Sidney Mitchell, Jr.

Leland Payton

HOWELL MEADOW (Suffolk County). 5 acres of meadow and marsh are one of the last natural estuarine communities along Goose Creek. Mr. George J. Wells donated the two adjacent tracts.

MIANUS RIVER GORGE—Addition—(Westchester County). An important buffer at the north end of the preserve, 29 acres contain dense beech-oak hardwood forest with some hemlock. Marshy areas can be found along the Mianus River. The purchase enlarges the preserve to 306 acres.

PACK FOREST (Warren County). The 11-acre purchase is a key addition to the Charles Lathrop Pack Demonstration Forest maintained by the New York State University College of Forestry. The Forest is situated on the Hudson River in the Adirondack Mountains, where northern and central hardwood forests intermingle. Fund-raising is in progress by the Adirondack Conservancy Committee. The addition is scheduled for transfer to the State University.

THORNE PROPERTY (Suffolk County). Both fresh and salt water marshes, as well as a brackish intermediate zone, are found on the 87-acre donation of Mrs. Julia L. Thorne. Great blue herons winter in the area.

TURKEY POINT PRESERVE—Jackson Addition—(Nassau County). The Long Island Chapter has launched efforts to preserve a 30-acre coastal strip along Brosewere Bay and Woodmere Channel. The second acquisition of 4 acres is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Jackson, bringing the total thus far to 6½ acres.

UPLANDS FARM SANCTUARY—Segment 2 Addition—(Suffolk County). 16 acres of meadowland are a gift of Mrs. Jane N. Nichols. The site of the Long Island Chapter office, the preserve of mixed hardwoods and open meadows overlooking Cold Spring Harbor is enlarged to 58 acres.

North Carolina

ENO RIVER—Sunderland Addition—(Orange County). 5 acres of open fields sloping toward the Eno River are a gift of Dr. Elizabeth Sunderland. This is the second acquisition in the Conservancy's program to assist in obtaining lands along a 20-mile stretch of the Eno for the Eno River State Park.

Ohio

CHAGRIN RIVER FOREST PRESERVE—Hord Tract—(Cuyahoga County). 28 acres of beech, maple, and hemlock ravines are a donation of Dr. Scott R. Inkley and Mr. Henry Chisholm, Jr. Steep banks front the east side of the Chagrin River. The preserve is scheduled for transfer to the Village of Hunting Valley for management by an appointed Conservation Commission.

EAGLE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE—Additions—(Portage County). Two purchases add 49 acres to the original 278-acre preserve. The first addition, 37½ acres, is an oak-hickory woodland, while the second, 11½ acres, includes a wet meadow and cattail marsh. Both tracts abut the preserve's western boundary and provide protection to the watershed which feeds the existing preserve's buttonbush swamp, sphagnum bog, and beaver pond. All three tracts are scheduled for transfer to the State of Ohio.

HARRIS TRACT (Lake County). Beech-maple and oak-hickory associations are found on the 26-acre preserve, which abuts Hidden Valley on the north bank of the Grand River. The tract is a gift of Resources, Inc., and will be transferred to the Lake County Metropolitan Park District.

THE WILDERNESS, Charles A. Eulett Preserve —Spires Addition—(Adams County). A gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Spires, 1 acre contains mixed mesophytic forest on dolomite formations. The preserve now totals 319 acres.

West Virginia

DOLLY SODS (Tucker, Grant, and Randolph Counties). The Dolly Sods Scenic Area in the Monongahela National Forest is a high section of the Allegheny plateau (4,000 foot range), with pure stands of large spruce, upland bogs, and windswept boulder fields. Mineral rights to the 15,617-acre tract were held by private owners, and the U.S. Forest Service feared mining of the six coal seams beneath the land. The Conservancy purchased these mineral rights at the request of the Forest Service, to whom they will be resold.

Wisconsin

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY MEMORIAL ARBORETUM — Additions — (Sheboygan County). Two tracts, 7 and 9 acres, were purchased for additions to the original 22-acre preserve. The land is primarily swamp and hardwood forest of green and black ash and American elm. Several ridges of beech, maple, and basswood are found on the lowland; wild lilies and royal ferns cover the swampy area. The additions will be conveyed to Lakeland College, as was the original tract.

THE THOMPSON POND STORY

by George B. Bookman

I

SPRINGTIME, DAYBREAK AT THOMPSON POND, NEAR PINE PLAINS, NEW YORK. The first rays of light filter down the side of Stissing Mountain toward the still pond waters. A bird call, clear and pure, pierces the silence. The cry is quickly taken up by others, and one by one the birds rise, hundreds of them, beginning their daily search for food over the marshes, fields, and hills that frame the pond. Down in the cattails, fish stir the weeds. Out on the open water, ducks sail vigilantly back and forth. At one end of the pond, a deer, having slaked its thirst at the water's edge, treads daintily back to the forest. The unspoiled glacial pond comes alive with the new day, as it has for eons past, as it will for eons to come . . .

II

LATE WINTER AFTERNOON, THE COZY FARMHOUSE SITTING ROOM OF MRS. THELMA HAIGHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S THOMPSON POND COMMITTEE. A FEW MILES DOWN THE ROAD FROM THE POND. A dozen or so men and women in country clothes are ranged on chairs and sofas around the room. The meeting comes to order. Minutes of the last meeting. Financial report. Fund-raising report. Past plans appraised, new plans developed. A goal is in sight—raising the $55,000 to repay the Conservancy's Project Revolving Fund for funds advanced to complete the purchase of the entire shoreline of Thompson Pond.

III

Between the two scenes sketched above, there is a very close and important connection. It can be summarized simply that, because of sustained interest and effort by local conservationists working with The Nature Conservancy, a unique natural resource only 100 miles from New York City is being preserved for the enjoyment of posterity.

Why and how was it done?

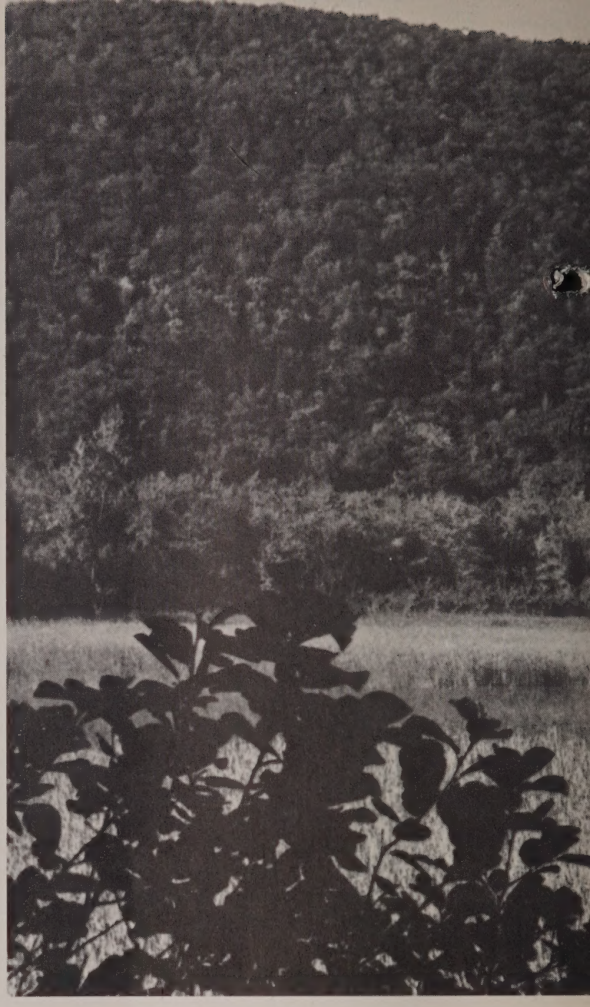
Thompson Pond is a natural asset fully worthy of the nearly 15 years of volunteer effort invested in protecting its shoreline. The pond itself is a 100-acre lake, little changed since the Ice Age. Songbirds and small mammals abound in the cattails and bushes along its marshy shore. The pond is considered to be by far the best location for waterbirds in the entire Central Hudson Valley region, except perhaps for a few spots along the Hudson River. Observations at Thompson Pond were a basic resource in producing "The Birds of Dutchess County", a Linnean Society publication and one of the best works ever published on birds of a single county.

As a bird sanctuary alone, Thompson Pond would be worth preserving. Red-tailed hawks soar over the pond in spring and summer from their nests on Stissing Mountain. Frequently seen larger birds include various species of ducks, coots, pileated woodpeckers, Canada geese, turkey vultures, and osprey. Even a peregrine falcon nest was once built on the mountain that looms over the west side of the pond. A profusion of warblers include the pond on their migration route.

While the pond waters are a favorite local fish-

James Deckner

At the preserve entrance, Committee members Forest Romero and Vivian Parkhurst examine publicity photos.



Dan Smiley

ing spot, they are of crucial *ecological* importance to all of Dutchess County. The pond is the headwaters for Wappingers Creek, the principal stream lying entirely within the County. As such, it plays a critical role in the ecology of the County's chief watershed.

Between the pond and Stissing Mountain lies a gently sloping gravel flat, now reverting from old pasture to woodland. Within the space of a few yards, from water to mountainside, can be seen all the different plant associations of the region: Aquatic communities with duck weed and water lilies give way to sedge and swamp marked by cattails and marsh grasses. Moving up the bank reveals shrubs, juniper, and heavy stands of grey birch. As the land starts to rise, pines emerge, and finally in the older woodlands further up the mountain are the beech-maple-hemlock association, tall oak and hickory, and the stark remains of a once-glorious chestnut.

Along the shore grows a rich variety of plants and flowers. One spot is carpeted annually with the rosy blossoms of fringed polygala (milkwort). Other varieties include pink and yellow ladies' slipper, wild ginger, red trillium, and—out in the water—great stretches of white and yellow pond lilies. There is also an abundance of mosses, lichens, and ferns, including some quite rare varieties. Members of the American Mycological Society, with a particular interest in fungi, have used the pond as an outdoor laboratory.

The uniqueness of the pond as a nature resource was recognized over 20 years ago by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Through the inspiration of Dr. Harry Shapiro, chairman of the Department of Anthropology and long-time resident of Pine Plains, the Museum used the setting of Thompson Pond and Stissing Mountain as the subject of a detailed three-dimensional exhibit of ecology-at-work. Since that time, the Warburg Hall of Ecology has continued to use the Thompson Pond display to graphically interpret ecological processes to the millions of people who visit the Museum.

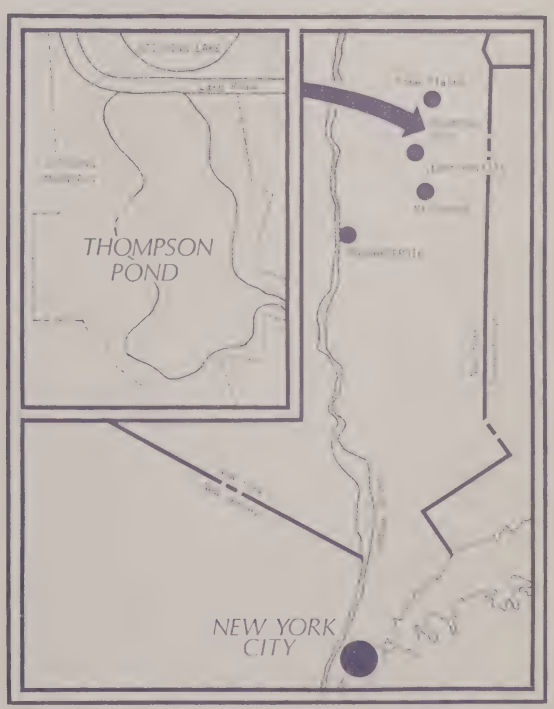
Originally created by a glacier millenia ago, Thompson Pond has miraculously escaped the shoreline development that has despoiled most other ponds so near an urban area. Indeed, its tranquil beauty has been an open secret among neighboring residents for many years. One who never forgot it was Mr. Elting Arnold, a U.S. Treasury Department lawyer from nearby Staatsburg. As a high school boy he used to visit the pond for birding and nature walking. In later years, when Arnold became Secretary of The Nature Conservancy, he conceived the idea of

View from the northwest side.

preserving this Dutchess County spot by raising funds to buy it for the Conservancy.

With the aid of Mr. Robert Palmatier, Town Supervisor, Arnold proposed his plan to Mr. George Brown, a Pine Plains cattle rancher who owned most of the pond and part of the shoreline. Brown was willing to sell 173 acres. A purchase money mortgage accepted by Brown covered over half the cost, and a loan from the Conservancy's Matching and Loan Fund (now the Project Revolving Fund) provided the balance. The next task was to raise the necessary funds, and for this Arnold recruited dedicated local support.

For chairman of a Thompson Pond Committee of The Nature Conservancy he enlisted Mrs. Thelma Haight, a diminutive grandmother who helps support her family by skilled work in a precision instrument assembly plant and whose spare-time passion is birdwatching. Single-minded and outspoken when it comes to conservation, Mrs. Haight proved to be an excellent leader of volunteers. The 20-member committee that assisted her included the Town Supervisor and his wife, the owner of the local newspaper, the president of



the bird club, the State Senator, a prominent attorney, several noted educators, and a sprinkling of well-to-do benefactors.

This combination of talents worked. In a continuous campaign lasting 5½ years, the Thompson Pond Committee repaid the Project Revolving Fund in full for the $20,000 cost of the entire project. Most of the donations were of modest size, with only a few sizable gifts. The final sum came from approximately 300 contributors, in amounts ranging from a few dollars up to one and two thousand dollars, with an average of about $65 apiece.

The fund-raising methods were imaginative. One of the most unusual was a price list of "shares" of beauty for sale. Under the slogan "Buy now, enjoy always," the list included such items as "1 black oak tree 19 feet in circumference, $500; 1 acre of blue sky with silhouetted wood ducks, $100; 1 hollow tree with pileated woodpecker's nest, $10; 1 muskrat house (present occupant will remodel in fall), $5 . . ."

In March 1972 an opportunity was offered to complete the purchase of the Thompson Pond shoreline by buying an additional 135 acres from another neighboring landowner. This time the negotiations were handled for the Committee by Mr. Kent Leavitt, a well-known area conservationist, who successfully acquired the tract for $55,000. Once again, The Nature Conservancy stepped in to advance the monies from its Project Revolving Fund, and the Thompson Pond Committee is now hard at work to repay the loan, plus interest.

James Deckner

It is interesting to note that most of the members of the original Committee of 15 years ago are active again in the new fund drive, along with many new faces. Mrs. Haight, still chairman, is aided by the same secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Vivian Parkhurst. Elting Arnold, with occasional trips to Dutchess County from his home in Washington, D.C., continues to lend advice and encouragement.

So far, with only nine months elapsed since the new parcel was acquired, more than half the required funds have been raised. This time, about 335 people have already contributed, but there have been more large donations, raising the average contribution to about $85.

In the new fund drive, the energies of individual Committee members are being aided by new public relations techniques. For example, a specially devised leaflet was sent to hundreds of residents of the Wappingers Creek watershed area, describing the urgency of preserving Thompson Pond because of its role in the ecology of the entire region. Leaflets concerning the fund drive were distributed at a local antique fair. Leading local business firms were approached, and several made significant contributions.

The Committee, however, is keenly aware that raising funds to repay the Project Revolving Fund is only part of their job. Equally important is the enlistment of local support for the conservation cause. Accordingly, the old "price list" of 15 years ago has been dusted off and is being reexamined. Quite possibly, an oak tree or two and a patch of blue sky will be offered "for sale" again to a new generation of conservation supporters.

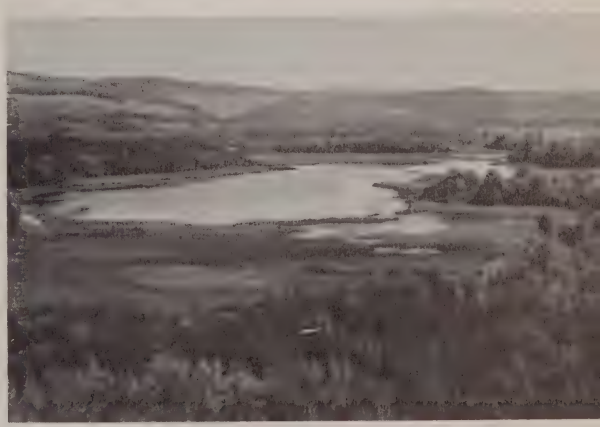
The Thompson Pond Committee definitely does not regard conservation as a means of locking up this beautiful acreage and shutting it away from the public. Quite the contrary. Thompson Pond, since its inception as a Conservancy project, has been used meaningfully by the people of the area. Local public and private elementary and secondary schools have visited the pond for nature classes. College students from Vassar in Poughkeepsie and Bennett in Millbrook have pursued their science studies along its shores. Teachers College (Columbia) has sent teachers in training to the pond. The area bird club and garden clubs, of course, are frequent users. Scout troops enjoy it as a site for outings and have contributed their efforts to maintain the trails.

And, of course, the most frequent users of the pond are its permanent residents: the birds, the fish, the mammals, and other creatures who benefit most from the fact that Thompson Pond is being "saved."

Above: Schoolchildren from the nearby community take a water sample at the Pond's edge.

Left: Committee member Phyllis Busch has undertaken an ecological study of the preserve.

Right: Panoramic view of the Pond from Stissing Mountain.



Dan Smiley

WALDRON: KEY TO THE SAN JUANS

by G. Jon Roush

In the Northwest corner of the United States lie the San Juan Islands, a luxuriant and beautiful island group covered with open meadows and forests of Douglas fir, Western red cedar, juniper, madrona, maple, hemlock, yew, oak, and lodgepole pine. The group includes more than 170 islands, most of them quite small, with a total coastline of hundreds of miles. They cluster between the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which leads out to the Pacific, and the Strait of Georgia, which reaches up along the rugged coast of British Columbia. The Islands are harbored by a majestic ring of snow-capped mountains, the Olympics on the west and the North Cascades on the east.

Until recently, the San Juans enjoyed the peace and quiet of benign neglect. Surrounded by strong currents and far enough north of Seattle to discourage casual visitors, the islands were thinly populated, and development was confined to farms and summer homes on the larger islands. Woods, rivers, and marshes remained to provide habitat for an extraordinary abundance of birds, animals, and marine life. Each spring the herons, pintails, canvasbacks, and mallards could count on finding familiar ponds waiting for their return.

Within the past few years, however, human visitors have shown up increasingly in the Islands. They come from the growing Seattle-Tacoma-Bellingham megalopolis, from Portland and California, and many of them want to stay. Land prices have begun to climb, and this year the Islands' first proposed condominium won official approval despite strong local opposition. Now each year on the Islands, the homes for deer and eagles give way to homes for men, and it is clear that the fate of the San Juans hangs in the balance.

The Nature Conservancy first entered the scene a few years ago. Seeing what was happening, the Western Regional Office and some members of the Western Washington Chapter organized a San Juan Islands Conservation Committee. The Committee, which includes residents of each of the major Islands, is charged with the responsibility for developing a long-range plan for land conservation in the San Juans. To date, the focus of the Committee's efforts has been Waldron Island.

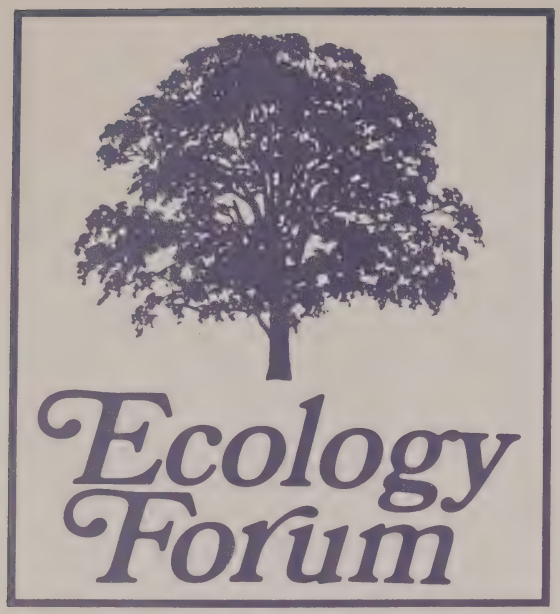
Waldron lies just below the Canadian border. With a land area of about four square miles, it has been buffered from population pressures by larger islands to the south. Unlike the larger islands, Waldron has no electricity, no telephones, and no ferry service. The mail is flown in, when the weather is right. Life on Waldron proceeds at a humane pace, and most of the approximately 85 residents like it that way.

Consequently, when a 256-acre parcel was put on the market for development, Waldronites turned to the Conservancy for help. The property includes ¾ of a mile of beautiful white sand beach. A quiet observer can often see otter playing. On the beach itself he will find sandpipers, plovers, yellowlegs, rails, pipits, dunlin, terns, and gulls. Behind him, on the same property, three fresh water marshes welcome great blue herons, whistling swans, and ducks, ducks, ducks. Behind that, the forest shelters eagles, hawks, dozens of smaller birds, and countless animals. To save this parcel would be to save a complete world of island ecology, going from beach to marsh to meadow to forest. On the other hand, if that 256 acres were subdivided, no doubt the rest of the island would eventually follow.

The Conservancy accepted the challenge and negotiated a contract to purchase the endangered site for $255,000. Although most of the Waldron residents had little money to spare, they dug into their savings to contribute $28,000 toward the purchase, and the Conservancy launched a nationwide campaign to raise the remainder.

Our hope has been that the Waldron campaign would not only save this unique island but would be a first step toward a successful San Juan conservation project. That hope is being fulfilled. Having demonstrated on Waldron what can be done, the Conservancy has been approached by residents of several other islands for similar help. The San Juan Conservation Committee has been expanded to include even more islanders, and our long-range task will be to choose among the opportunities available to us.

The immediate task, however, is to finish paying off the Waldron purchase. We must complete that before we can move on the larger job. It is still possible to save much of the islands' irreplaceable resources, but time is running out. As the only private organization that has taken responsibility for coordinating private efforts throughout the San Juans, the Conservancy has a rare opportunity to preserve land in a major island group. The job is large and time is short, but the base is being prepared.



No. 6

by Dr. Robert E. Jenkins

WHY SAVE LAND?

In spite of the Conservancy's long, effective record in the task of saving land, we seldom stop to reflect on the root biological necessity for our activities. Our desire to preserve land is often motivated by the land's beauty, the rarity of some organism or natural formation, educational value, or the need for the relief of natural open spaces in urban centers. Granted that these immediate reasons are important, there are even more vital and far-reaching purposes in the preservation of natural areas.

Far from being a matter of simple preference, natural areas preservation is critical because we cannot survive and prosper in a totally altered and man-managed biosphere. It has been observed that perhaps the only reason human society has persisted is because of our "failures" in land management. If we had ever succeeded in doing to the surface of the earth what we have tried to do, ecological systems would have generally collapsed long ago. It is the resilience of natural systems, the dynamism of plant and animal communities, and natural ecological succession which have sometimes managed to overcome the worst effects of man's abusive alteration of the landscape. Crab grass should be a sign of hope to us all.

In a symposium at the American Institute of Biological Sciences Meetings in Minneapolis, Dr. Eugene Odum presented an interesting paper in which he outlined a procedure for quantifying the values of natural areas. Dr. Odum's approach involves utilizing the universal currency of energy transfer to compare several different kinds of systems. He characterizes these as sun-powered systems, subsidized sun-powered systems, and fuel-powered systems. Examples of the first would include open oceans, forests, and grasslands, which have an energy budget derived virtually entirely from incident sunlight. The subsidized systems would include both natural and artificial examples, such as salt marsh on the one hand, and fertilized agricultural lands on the other. These systems, in addition to converting solar energy, are the recipients of energy and energy-generating materials from other areas. Fuel-powered systems are exemplified by cities.

There are two important points to be made about this classification. The first is that subsidized systems are estimated to have average energy budgets about ten times greater than sun-powered systems, and that fuel-powered systems have budgets a hundred times greater than subsidized systems.

The second point is that artificial systems, both fuel-powered and subsidized sun-powered are not complete. They are deficient in components and processes which recycle materials, and therefore such fragmentary systems produce net exports or effluents. In the man-managed systems, we have attempted to extract the maximum possible product for human use and have not allocated the requisite energies for closing the circle of self-sustenance. The effluents of the artificial systems are dumped off on natural systems for recycling. Organic sewage and a vast miasma of novel molecules are dumped into both the air and water. Natural processes of bio-degradation are expected to reduce this load without destabilizing the system. Because of the vastly greater energy budgets of the contrived systems, the burden we thus put on natural environments is tremendous. It is estimated, for example, that three million acres of trees would be necessary to absorb the carbon dioxide produced in one medium large city.

Therefore each area that we preserve has a vital *raison d'être* in its continued performance of natural ecological functions. Pollution is absorbed and abated, hydrological cycles mediated, flood waters accommodated and dissipated, soil fertility maintained, biogeochemical cycles perpetuated, climate modulated, etc. Obviously, however, the amount of land which The Nature Conservancy can preserve is only a small part of what is necessary to keep the world functioning as a viable biological system. Odum's preliminary estimates, for example, are that well over half of the world is going to have to be kept in functional natural eco-

systems if we are to avert a general biological collapse.

The significance of The Nature Conservancy's efforts, however, goes even beyond this, because we attempt to preserve not just areas of trees and natural greenery but high quality natural areas of ecological significance. In other words, we attempt to save areas which are outstanding in a local or national sense for their unusual qualities. These qualities are generally (but not always) biological and related to the richness, productivity, and diversity of the natural system, the lack of disturbing influences, and/or the rarity of some of the species or phenomena to be found on the site. Since we can not be expected to save a sufficiently large quantity of land with our limited resources, we attempt at least to preserve those of very high quality.

As a logical minimum objective in a program of land preservation, it makes sense to try to preserve adequate representative samples of every kind of natural system and of the habitats of every sort of biological organism. The preservation of diversity in an increasingly constricted natural environment is of tremendous importance. Every biological species represents a potential resource of indefinite practical utility, and, once eradicated, such a species can never be recreated. Each year, we find new species of plants and animals of great usefulness in the pool of previously unregarded natural populations. How much poorer would we be if the *Penicillium* fungus, for example, had been eradicated before the value of penicillin was understood?

This natural diversity is also intrinsically valuable because, in addition to potential importance in human affairs, each species plays a unique role in ecological dynamics. It is generally accepted by ecologists today that the more species an ecosystem contains the more alternative pathways exist and that this has a buffering effect on environmental stability. As diversity decreases, stability decreases, and the fragmented system exhibits increasing environmental fluctuation, in some instances becoming wild and unpredictable.

Crop plant monocultures are an example of this. When a natural system is depleted of a great many of its ordinary component species, some remaining species are released from the controlling factors of predation, competition, or disease which formerly regulated their numbers. Under such circumstances pests are created, many for which we have never found satisfactory remedies. Since the dangers of wide-spread use of virulent pesticides have been recognized, an emerging strategy for pest control involves the use of natural predators, competitors, or pathogens which are reintroduced from their refuges in the remaining natural ecosystems. Of course, if there are no remaining natural refugia for the requisite organisms, no such solution will be possible.

Natural areas in years to come will assume great value in environmental management in other ways. Natural ecosystems act as controls on our global experiments in landscape alteration. Without such natural systems against which to compare the effects of human activities on manipulated systems, it will not be possible to distinguish between insignificant environmental fluctuations and evidences of actual system deterioration. Without such natural systems to use as templates, we will also have no viable models to guide us in the restoration of environmental stability and the development of acceptably viable compromise strategies in ecosystem management. Unfortunately such concerns can not be easily made retroactive. The time to save our remaining natural areas is now.

CARES BECOMES INDEPENDENT FOUNDATION

Drs. Robert Jenkins and Edgar Garbisch jointly announced that the Center for Applied Research in Environmental Sciences (CARES), established by the Conservancy in 1971, is being reestablished as an independent foundation. The new foundation, Environmental Concerns, Inc., will be directed by Dr. Garbisch at the same site in St. Michaels, Maryland. It will continue its work in salt marsh restoration, but expects to eventually expand its horizons to cover other kinds of ecosystems and other environmental problems.

The CARES project has received enthusiastic and widespread recognition, and its successful growth is anticipated. The Board, staff, and members of the Conservancy take pride in having nurtured this promising program in environmental science and wish it a vigorous and publicly beneficial future.

ROBERT LEE SIMS

Robert Lee Sims, Chairman of the Northern California Chapter, died suddenly on December 3, 1972, following opening ceremonies dedicating the 2,100-acre Martha Alexander Gerbode Preserve in California's Marin Headlands. Mr. Sims was also active as a Director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association and of Green Foothills, as well as a representative on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Conservancy members and staff on the West Coast are seeking a suitable preserve to honor his memory.

CONSERVANCY OPENS NEW REGIONAL AND FIELD OFFICES

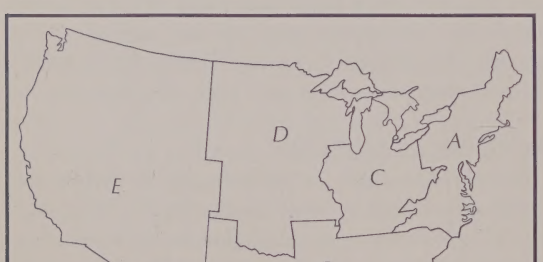
In order to build an even closer relationship between Conservancy programs, members, and land preservation needs in the Southeast, the Conservancy opened a fifth regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, in January 1973. Rick Jones, previously Director of the Midwest Office, will now coordinate Conservancy activities in the eight states ranging from South Carolina to Texas. The address of the new office will be announced in the Spring *News*.

Geoffrey Barnard has assumed responsibility as Director of the Midwest Office in Minneapolis. Barnard holds an MBA from Stanford and has recently returned from a Peace Corps assignment in South America.

Two new field offices have also been added to provide increased attention to the Northeast and Northwest areas. Within the Eastern Regional Office, a Northeast Field Office has opened in Montpelier, Vermont, under the direction of Davis Cherington, previously Director of Preserve Management at the National Office. The Montpelier office will focus on Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Within the Western Regional Office, a Northwest Field Office is now operating in Portland, Oregon, with special concentration on the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. Jon Roush, former Western Regional Office representative in San Francisco, heads the new Northwest effort.

Since the creation of the Southeast Office has realigned regional office responsibilities, the states now covered by each of the five offices are listed below:



A. ***Eastern Regional Office:*** *Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina.*

B. ***Southeast Regional Office:*** *South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas.*

C. ***Mid-America Regional Office:*** *Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia.*

D. ***Midwest Regional Office:*** *Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma.*

E. ***Western Regional Office:*** *Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Alaska.*

HUEY JOHNSON TO HEAD TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

After nine years as the Conservancy's Western Regional Director, Huey D. Johnson, a trained wildlife manager and former marketing executive, has announced his decision to leave the Conservancy staff to head up a newly created urban land conservation organization, the Trust for Public Land.

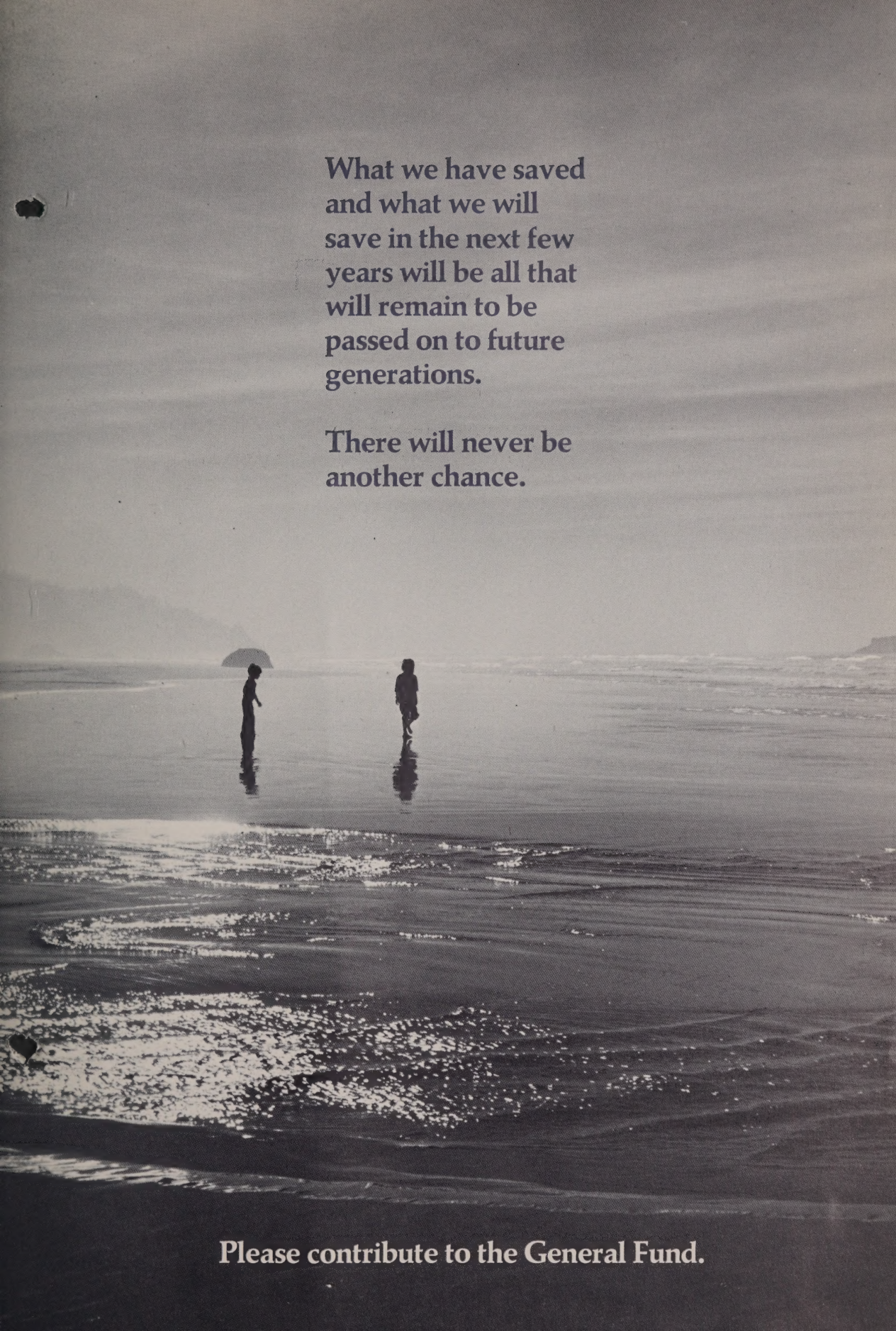
Mr. Johnson, who has made his philosophy known in conservation circles nationally and internationally, along with former Conservancy staffer Greg Archbald, who helped form the new organization, hopes to use techniques developed by the Conservancy and other groups to seek ways to eliminate the open space deficiencies facing city dwellers across the country. The Trust for Public Land plans to train professionals in urban land acquisition methods and will cooperate with various levels of government in its programs.

Conservancy representative to the recent U.N. Conference in Sweden and editor of the environmental report "No Deposit, No Return," Johnson feels that without the opportunity to relate to urban open space, the citizens of metropolitan regions will find it difficult to appreciate the meaning of efforts to preserve larger, more remote lands.

Dr. Everett Woodman, Conservancy President, said that the Conservancy Governors, members, and staff "acutely regret Huey's decision to leave, but must respect and admire his initiative and join him in his desire to create a new program to meet what are clearly pressing public needs. We wish him every success."

Steve Steinhour, previously coordinating the San Francisco Bay Project, will assume the Directorship of the Western Regional Office. Steinhour stated that "the Conservancy expects to work closely with the Trust for Public Land in the future and looks forward to its contributions in the task of land conservation."

Headquarters for the Trust for Public Land will be in San Francisco.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